



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TEXARKANA HOTEL MANAGER GUILTY OF HURRICANE RELATED FRAUD

(Texarkana, TX) United States Attorney Matthew D. Orwig announced today that a 64-year-old Texarkana hotel manager has pleaded guilty to hurricane related fraud charges in the Eastern District of Texas. **DENA FUSELIER**, of Atlanta, Texas, pleaded guilty to five counts of wire fraud before United States Magistrate Judge Caroline M. Craven.

According to information presented in court, shortly after Hurricane Katrina in August, 2005, the Ramada Inn in Texarkana, Texas entered into an agreement with the American National Red Cross to house evacuees. The Red Cross agreed to pay for or reimburse the Ramada Inn at a rate of \$54.00 per night for each room provided to an evacuee or evacuee's family. Fuselier was employed as general manger of the Ramada Inn at this time, in which capacity she instructed employees of the Ramada Inn to check each evacuee into the hotel for a 14-day period. Fuselier also instructed the Ramada Inn employees to maintain evacuees on the hotel's computer system as if they were still guests if the evacuee should check-out before the end of the 14-day period. Fuselier then instructed hotel employees to transfer the checked-out evacuee from their original room to an "off-market" room. Off-market rooms are those rooms at the Ramada Inn which are

under renovation or used for storage and not available to house hotel guests. False billing statements were then sent to the Red Cross. The total amount of over-billing to the Red Cross was \$19,980.00.

Fuselier was indicted by a federal grand jury on May 4, 2006. She faces up to 20 years in federal prison and a fine of up to \$250,000 at sentencing. A sentencing date has not been set.

This case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Barry Bryant.

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